



Western Grouse Coalition Promotes State Sage Grouse Planning

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH - The Western Grouse Coalition (WGC) urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Bureau of Land Management to spend Fiscal Year 2015 working with Western states to implement state crafted management and recovery plans to conserve and recover sage grouse. At the urging of WGC, Congress included a one year moratorium in the Omnibus Appropriations legislation sent to the President over this past weekend. Restrictions passed by Congress prohibit the FWS from pursuing listing activities for the sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act, which was expected in September of 2015 pursuant to litigation settlements entered into by FWS with environmental activists.

"These agencies should spend their time and resources working with states to implement state crafted solutions for the recovery of sage grouse. State wildlife agencies have primary jurisdiction over the species and they are working hard and spending millions to protect sage grouse," stated Allen Freemyer, President of WGC. *"We expect the federal agencies to respect these efforts and spend the next year working with us instead of holding the listing hammer over our Governors' heads."*

"Congress has demonstrated an unwillingness to support USFWS's heavy handed approach to management of sage grouse across the west. It's time for Congress to consider reasonable legislative approaches, such as the Gardner/Enzi legislation, to provide for state plan implementation and management. It's the best way to conserve the sage grouse and provide certainty for sage grouse country," said Freemyer.

The Western Grouse Coalition (WGC) is dedicated to preserving our western way of life. We value our public land and are working with a wide range of stakeholders to promote sustainable resource management and development in the sagebrush ecosystem. WGC understands that conservation and responsible economic develop are not mutually exclusive. To learn more about us, please visit our website.

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